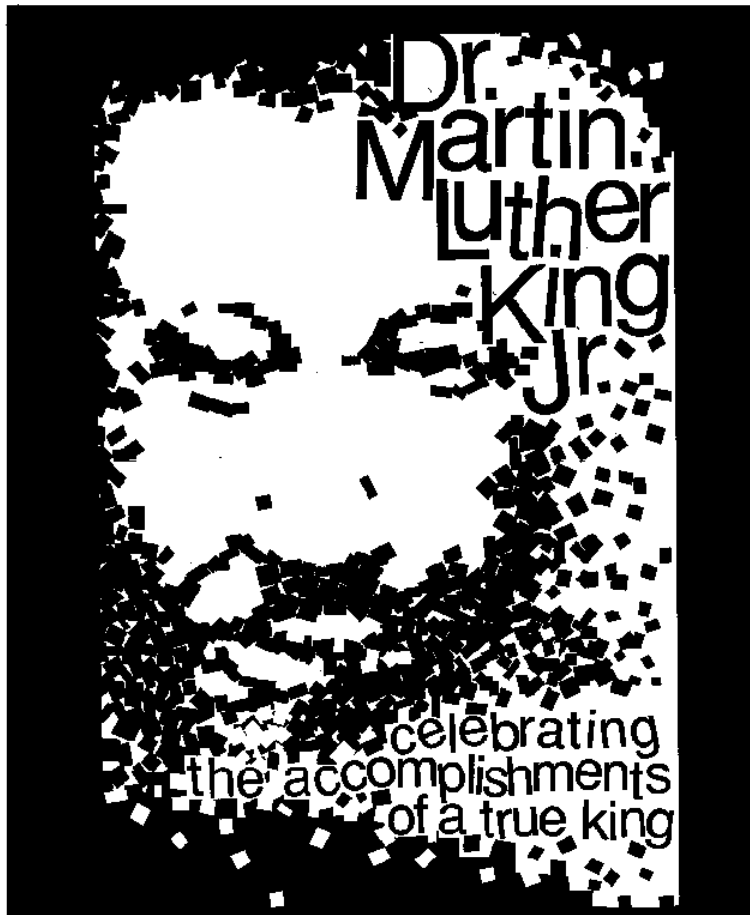


Celebrating the Legacy, Looking to the Future



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Essays and Poems by Columbia Public School Students

Columbia Values Diversity Celebration
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I Never Knew

I never knew that one special voice... ..
I had heard many things about this special person.
He came in and announced his plan that one day
Blacks and whites would soon be treated equally.
I thought that he was just messing around,
Don't tell anyone but I didn't think that it would work.

I never knew how much his dream meant to him.
I now understand that without his dream I wouldn't be here.
I wouldn't even have been thought about.
Thanks to him I live in a world where equality is a must.

I never knew that "I have a dream" would change the world.
His dream is in reality and we live with it day by day.
If I could have a chance to say anything to him
I would say, "Thanks so much for the dream."

I now know how much he wanted this dream to come true.
I wish that with all my heart he could be here watching his dream grow.
I know that he is in heaven watching his dream grow
All over the United States to other countries.

Liz Koyejo, Jefferson Junior High School, Grade 9-Ms. Spate-Smith

Never Perfect, Always Better

Our world is far from perfect and it will never be perfect, it seems a lost cause to continue to strive for such an unreachable goal. However, looking back at the great accomplishments of the past there is proof that the world can get closer to perfection by the work of the past and the present and the work of the future.

There are many people from the past that have helped make our world the place it is today and who I greatly admire. Rachel Carson and Abraham Lincoln are simply two of the multiple people who come to mind. Rachel Carson is a person I admire because when wrote Silent Spring a book which changed the world by opening up people's eyes to the great destruction caused by pesticides. Abraham Lincoln also comes to mind because he began the long struggle for the equal rights of black people (this struggle was carried on by people like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.)

These people have helped make our world the place it is today but it is up to us to help maintain and make better our world. One way that I do this is that I volunteer at a horseback riding center. This organization helps disabled people experience the joys of horseback riding. In addition to helping disabled people personally, I try to keep people from making fun of them at school. I also try to stop cruel comments about homosexuals and simply other people who are different. I am not claiming that I am perfect and always stand up for these people, but I try. Another way I try to make the world better is that I am very conscious about the environment, I recycle, pick up trash, ride my bike or walk instead of taking a car when I can, and I am not a wasteful consumer. What I mean by this, is that I try not to buy products that I know I will soon tire and simply throw away.

Although I plan to continue all of these activities I also plan to add more. I would like to help out with Habitat For Humanity,. This is an organization that builds houses for homeless people. I also would like to be a veterinarian, like my father. I have always wanted to be able to cure the animals what many people consider family members. As a more subtle way to help make the world a better place I hope to have an energy efficient car and I will avoid using air conditioning excessively.

Making our world a better place is not something that can be accomplished by a select few people or even all at once. It is something we have worked for in the past, are working for now, and will continue to strive for as long as humanity exists.

Becca O'Brien, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7

One Day

One day we will see
The things we have in common.
The good in our differences.
How we are alike.
One day we won't see
Through others
Past them
The bad things.
One day we will see and not judge.
We will see what all of us know inside of us.

One day we will sing together a song of joy.
Sing a song of peace
Know everyone is different.
Let our constant struggles cease.
One day we will sing rhymes with a ring.
Bring together voices on our choices.
Let our dreams carry true.
Singing our dreams all the way through.

One day we will
Join hands to make a chain of kindness.
Connect our feelings because we care.
Come together to laugh and play
Bring our hands together to make the puzzle of peace.

One day we will
Listen to all voices.
Talk and not tease.
One day we will form a circle and be friends.

One day we will paint a rainbow of
Happiness
Similarities
The diversity of our lives.
One day we will paint over our conflicts;
We will join in painting peace.

Class Composition by: Brandon Baker, Ashley Claybrook, Matthew Franklin, Jamie Harris, Andria Heese, Zoe-Love Holt, Jayron Hughes, Sung-Hee Jeon, Benjamin Koenig, Danyang Liu, Cortney Meder, Stephanie Pantal, Brittany Powell, Haotian Qin, Patrick Westcott, Shin-Myung Yoon, Lee Elementary School, Grade 5- Ms. Dickinson

A Blanket From the Dawn of Time

Many people feel that Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy should become more of a reality. His famous speech talks about his dream of equality in the United States. We still have a long way to go to reach this hope. This man wanted everyone to be equal, no more or less important than the next person.

In Mr. King's eye, one man was just as important as him or his kin. Whether that man be white, black, catholic or Jew, it didn't matter.

People are prejudiced by what they see or hear. If someone gets a bad grade, a person will immediately think that they're a bad student and can't pay attention. People never stop to wonder if the person is depressed, a loved one has just died or if they're merely having a bad day. Prejudice has lain over the nation like an old blanket from the dawn of time. Some places have holes where people like Martin Luther King, Jr. have ripped through to let their feelings of equality be known. Other places have been repaired by the people who still feel strongly because of their race, religion or beliefs. Some places stay the same from people who believe in one thing and do another, feel neutral or believe in one thing but are too afraid to speak out. Is America equal? Will it ever be? I don't believe it is now but perhaps it can be. Only time and America's people can reveal the answer.

Brianna Johnoff, Smithton Middle School, Grade 6-Ms. Anderson

"IT"

It broke people down and left them with little strength.
It made me hate, and me hated.
It made riots, fights, protests, and more.
It put people in jail in the hospital, and in their gravebeds.

It sunk into our world like one in quicksand.
It damaged our world like a 1000 exploding bombs.
It spread quickly like a contagious disease.
It hit people hard like a blow to the face.

It lasted.
It stayed.
It was death with.

Then...

It built people up, and stored much confidence within.
It made me love, and me loved.
It stopped the riots, the fights, the protest, and more
It stopped the incarceration, the hospitalization, and the going of gravebeds.

It rose above our world of hatred, and hurting.
It restored our world like new buildings being built everyday.
It spread quickly like the telling of an exciting secret.
It protected people like a Big Sister to a Little Sister, or a mother to a child.
It lasted.
It stayed.
It was left death with.

What was "IT"?
"IT" was segregation.
What was "IT"?
"IT" was desegregation.

Marquia Armour, Jefferson Junior High School, Grade 9-Ms. McFarland

I have a dream to make the world a better place like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. did. I have learned from my past, and what I'm doing now. To find how I can help in the future, to make the world a better place.

I have learned from my teachers and family that friends come from all over the world. I have a friend from China named Asha, who is very nice. Also I have a friend in Mexico whose name is Paola. Both of them are very nice and I don't even think that they are from a different country.

Currently to help make the world a better place, I've been trying to conserve resources. I take short showers and turn off running water when needed to conserve water. To conserve electricity I turn off lights when I'm not in the room. This is how I'm trying to make the world a better place.

I have a dream for the future for the environment to be cleaner and better for the whole world. When I get older I will join a cleanup group to take care of the environment. Also when I'm older I will get some of my friends together and work at a Nature refuge. I know that it takes more than me to make the world a better place in the future.

In conclusion I know to make the world a better place we need to make friends worldwide. We have learned to do this in our past and what we're doing now. Also to do what we can do by ourselves, and then seek help from others to be able to make the world a better place in our futures.

Claire Friedrichsen, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7-Mr. Blackburn

Imagine

Imagine a world gray of color. We all live in the same box houses, drive the same car, wear the same clothes, live the same destiny. We are all one mind, one life, one personality. Such a life is the life of a brick, it ceases to change and grow...it will always be a brick, and never anything more. Imagine being blinded of color; seeing your world as a blend of blacks, whites, and grays. There are no more vibrant blues, exotic reds, and calm violets. No yellows, neon greens, oranges, silvers, or umpa-lumpa purples. Only gray. You see nothing else.

Now, imagine the world you live in. Fuchsia, sea green, sky blue, fiery red, and marigold yellow. We wake up every morning to the sunrise at our windows, the reds, the yellows, the lavenders, the oranges, and then the blues, each color shining a different light, singing a different tune, each with its own personality. We go about our day, the brown coffee, the yellow street lines...never thinking of the diverse colors around us. They're a guaranteed privilege. Suppose one day we woke to find no blues or greens?

What would happen to the sky, the oceans. The little green gummy bears, the Blue Man Show on Broadway, grass, the chlorophyll-filled leaves? They lose their touch. They become like a brick...unchangeable, no longer able to grow. Colors are more than just colors; they are part of our life, part of our way of thinking. Every color is like a new idea, a new perspective on life.

We should listen and learn. Color is a universal language: a leaf is green in Hong Kong as well as the heartlands. As Andrew Holmes said, "It is well to remember that the entire population of the universe, with one trifling exception, is composed of others." While we may think our ideas are the best, our ideas are outnumbered by 7 billion others, just as our world is composed of infinite colors, not just blacks and grays.

Red like the music of a hummingbird, orange like a screech sending chills down my back, yellow like a lullaby, green like the sound of a breeze. Listen. Listen to the colors of our world.

There is a reason why we have two ears and only one mouth; we should listen to others and what they have to voice. Listening is the ultimate method for learning. It allows us to grow, and develop, for when you blend red, yellow, or blue you can create gleaming colors - you create the canvas of life. Diversity in colors and beliefs is essential to all aspects of life from learning to love.

We are like a painting, every color important, every color different. Every color complementing another - all blended to make one brilliant masterpiece, each color in its own place.

Rula Khreis, Rock Bridge High School, Grade 12-Mr. Turner

What We've Done and What We Have Left to Do

We've come a long way from chains and segregation,
We've opened our minds and allowed them to grow,
To not only realize we were dramatically wrong,
But have changed our beliefs as well as our actions.

Single humans have changed the mind of America,
Saved the souls of many, changed the character of our world.
Peace, kindness, are now a reality.
We are forever indebted to those achievements of those individuals,
We must forever remember those accomplishments,
And use them as stepping stones to further our development.

Yet the problem is not gone, even though we've made amazing headway,
We should not allow ourselves to stop.
Stereotypes are still clearly defined, invisible barriers create separation.
But we can change this, we can continue the battle to equality,
We must work together and we will succeed!

Sara Hogan, Hickman High School, Grade 11-Mrs. Rahm

Forever Winter

Our world has changed
As have the seasons.
It was once summer,
And simple green consumed our slumber.

And then with fall dreams were awoken
As lovely words of peace were spoken.
The leaves turned color, but not one
As dozens mixed in the glimmering sun.

Our world learned, and is still,
To love each other, with all our will.
Once winter arrives we will all be free,
No longer blinded by the leaves we see.

But let us fear for spring will strive
To bring about our hatred inside.
Spring will bring back green leaves,
But each of us must still believe.

Fall is where our hearts should be,
For all the colors such a sight to see.
Race nor creed nor color do we care,
We'll celebrate the world we share.

Rebecca Critser, Jefferson Junior High School, Grade 9-Ms. McFarland

Rough Times

I heard the saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover." I know because I have a friend from El Salvador. Everyone didn't like her except me. Then everyone liked her afterwards. Some people make fun of her singing. She can speak Spanish. They make fun of that too. I'm glad I was her first friend. I miss her a lot. I hope she is safe.

Marie E. Buxbaum, Midway Heights Elementary School, Grade 5-Ms. Spellman

Violence

Gunshots, death, drugs, diseases and lots of other dilemmas are just a few things that people need to solve. It has taken many lives including the wonderful Mr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

My grandma always told me, "Agu ante tan ito y la fruta coera en tu mano" which means wait a little while and the fruit will fall in your hand. That means "be patient".

Since she passed on I've kept those words. Things that go on in the world like now, I've been patient to see if maybe it will stop. Hopefully in the future some people will realize that violence is wrong. I mean we should all know that, but some people just don't care.

I know a girl like me couldn't possibly stop violence, but maybe if I just start by telling friends and family first and maybe they will spread the word, one day maybe my dream will come true.

Shoenae Bowden, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7

My Thoughts and Feelings

You know what a wise man said, "I have a dream that my four children will once live in a world where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." That wise man means was the one and only, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Many others including myself would like to follow that dream. Some are, the rest, here is a question for you. Are we really following our words? We may talk the talk, but can we really walk the walk.

During the years I've been alive (12 years) I've been taught to help those in need and to be nice to and do the right thing. My neighbor as I might say is old. He had a dog that he had trouble walking and keeping in shape. One day I decided to help her out. My assistance lit up my neighbor's and the dog's day. Another example is when I found money lying under a gate. Instead of taking it and being selfish I searched for the owner. Guess what, it paid off. I got the money!

To this day I try to help decrease violence and follow the rules. Once when playing basketball anger and tension coming my way, I kept my cool and said, "Getting kicked out of the game isn't worth it." During school last year, I was threatened. I had the chance to fight and show how tough I really am, but getting through all that trouble because a couple of kids didn't like me wasn't worth the trouble.

I dream that I hope for my kids to follow my words and actions (only the good ones I make.) Hopefully I want them to enjoy life and to help each other, especially when people are in need. Plus I really hope they will stand up for their own rights.

All in all my biggest dream till the day I die is that I will continue to help those in need and to become nice and generous. Plus I want to do the right thing to decrease violence and trouble. My kids might do what's right and follow this. If not, they will promise me one thing from Dr. King and me. They should not become a follower if they know something is wrong. They should become a leader and do what's right.

Miriam Tesfamikael, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7-Mr. Blackburn

Shadows of the Past

Refurbished to its historic glory,
The theater stands, wise and proud; inside,
Maroon velvet curtains, a relic of times lost.
The hand painted dome and sparkling
Chandeliers dazzle me. Faint candlelight
Luminescence invites my smile, as
I study the effulgent ceiling's warm glow,
as carefully-crafted crevices create
shadows that dance vivaciously
in the decorated concavity.

But thoughts transport me to an unbeknownst
Time when the theater, 'tho equally
As grand, bolstered division as ubiquitously as
stone. Segregation engulfed visitors,
Like city's heavy smog--separated
By superficiality, skin-deep
Divisions, ignoring virtue, passion,
Disposition. They entered through remote
Doors, drank at disparate fountains, estranged
Species, whose paths diverged far before the
Theater doors, in a world devoid of compassion.

Yet the theatre attests to this past
(however tragic) with beauty, as the
ceiling's shadows still leap and a rainbow
coalesces on stage, its members dancing
in unison into the far-advancing night.

Althea Skinner, Rock Bridge High School, Grade 12-Ms. Pat Turner

Hate is Baggage

For as long as I can remember, students have been encouraged to write something in remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He was a strong, African American man who delivered a speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., on August 28th, 1963. He declared "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of it's creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal." A little further into his speech, he vocalized "I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Not only did these heart-felt words cause some to feel anger, but they gave hope to those dealing with prejudice, discrimination and racism.

Being a young, middle-classed, Caucasian, I actualize that I will never fully or even more than remotely comprehend what African Americans have, and continue to experience day by day. However, I do know that I can take Dr. King's "I Have A Dream Speech" to heart and treat others with respect, quality and most of all, love.

As many do say, it is not the past that we can change, it is the future that we hold in our hands. It is up to the youth of today to make a difference, to change this world for the prosperity of all people. We have many great role models and teachers like Dr. Marti Luther King Jr., those who have instilled morals and hope within us. But I ask, what is the point of these great men and women, if we do not act? If we do continue to live in a world full of hate and prejudice, we will be nothing but sad creatures that may as well all be dead so we do not continue to do injustice to one another. On the other hand, if we treat each other as equals and care and love so much, we will be living life to its fullest, the purpose of life will be achieved. As Edward Furlong's character expresses in the 1998 film American History X, written by David McKenna, "hate is baggage. Life's too short to be pissed off all the time it's just not worth it."

Amber Pittman, Hickman High School, Grade 12-Mr. Mark Janda

Dreams

Just like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream, I also have a dream. My dream is to help the needy by donating clothes and encouraging cleaner facilities. This dream can be achieved by hard work and donations from those that can afford giving.

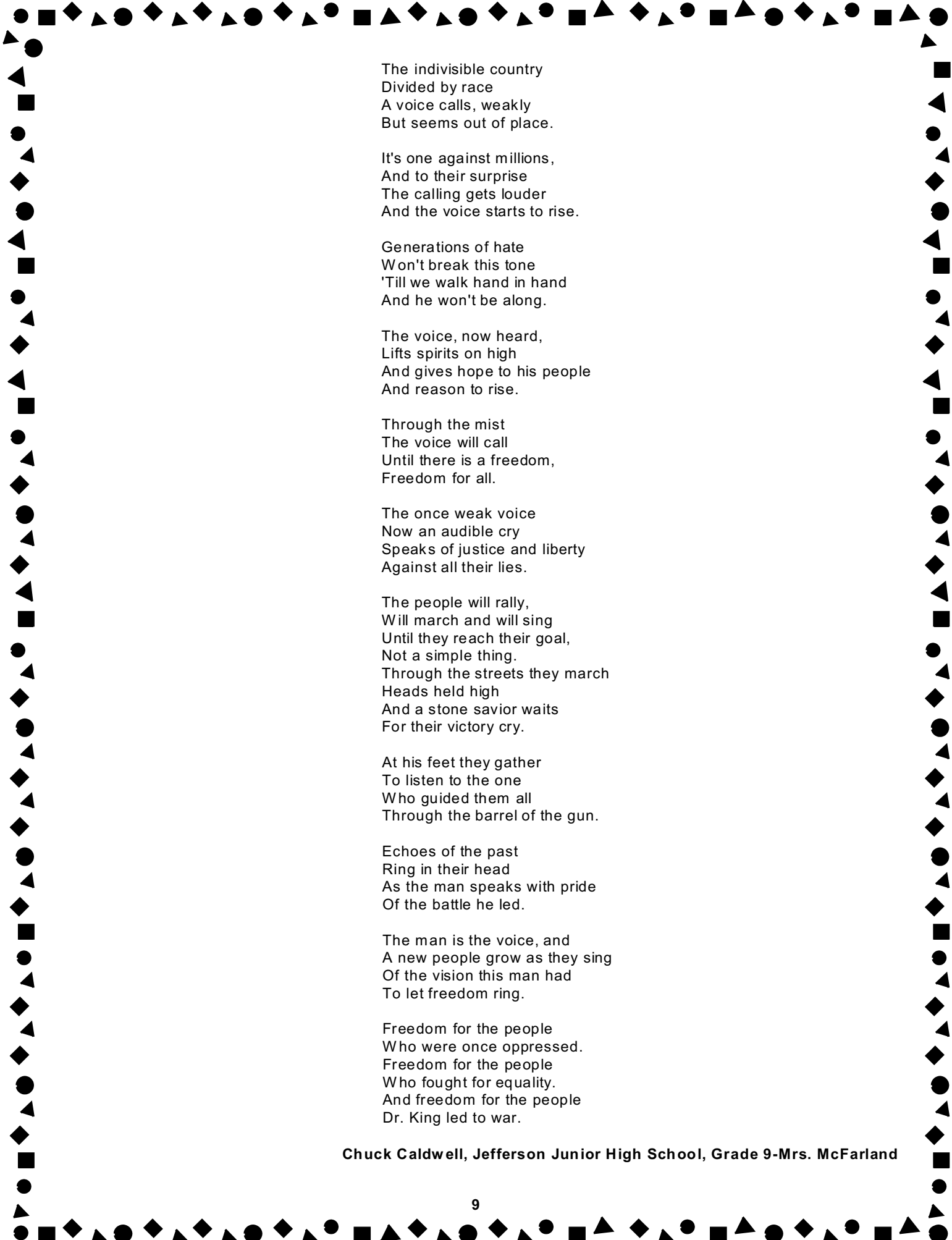
What I have learned from the past, or what has been passed on to me; comes from my family. For example at church my mom encouraged us to donate to the church for the church; and also what the church donates. My whole family pitches in on the idea of donating to goodwill. My mom has explained it many times about donations to the Goodwill, and every time I donate my clothes; I feel good about it.

What I do now to make the world a better place is easy, but effective. When flyers go around about canned food drives in the mail locally or at church, I get a grocery bag; and fill it up with all sorts of canned food. Also like I said before, I am glad when I donate clothes to Goodwill.

For dreams, I have a lot, some little; some big for the future. When I grow up I want to start the nation's largest canned food/clothes drive. It will be so huge, every person that needs these things will get plenty, maybe even extra. I also hope to organize a safe convenient building that is clean for the fortunate. In the buildings there will be plenty of beds, covers, showers, hot meals served every day; and many other things to make the people happy and safe.

Finally in conclusion, I've learned about donating at different places to the less fortunate, from my family. I wish to make the world a better place, the task might be small, but in some way it will make a difference. Now lastly, I have big and small dreams to help the less fortunate, for the future.

Celeste Spaihnhour, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7



The indivisible country
Divided by race
A voice calls, weakly
But seems out of place.

It's one against millions,
And to their surprise
The calling gets louder
And the voice starts to rise.

Generations of hate
Won't break this tone
'Till we walk hand in hand
And he won't be along.

The voice, now heard,
Lifts spirits on high
And gives hope to his people
And reason to rise.

Through the mist
The voice will call
Until there is a freedom,
Freedom for all.

The once weak voice
Now an audible cry
Speaks of justice and liberty
Against all their lies.

The people will rally,
Will march and will sing
Until they reach their goal,
Not a simple thing.
Through the streets they march
Heads held high
And a stone savior waits
For their victory cry.

At his feet they gather
To listen to the one
Who guided them all
Through the barrel of the gun.

Echoes of the past
Ring in their head
As the man speaks with pride
Of the battle he led.

The man is the voice, and
A new people grow as they sing
Of the vision this man had
To let freedom ring.

Freedom for the people
Who were once oppressed.
Freedom for the people
Who fought for equality.
And freedom for the people
Dr. King led to war.

Chuck Caldwell, Jefferson Junior High School, Grade 9-Mrs. McFarland

The Dream to Kindness

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Had a dream to
Make black people free.
For the world to be a place
Where kindness flowed through the air,
To make the world a pleasant place.
Martin had a dream
For everyone to be treated fairly,
Their rights to be fair, too.
He wanted black and white kids
To be friends.
That was Martin's dream.
To make his dream a reality,
We need to judge people by
How they act,
Not by their skin.

Laura Gherardini, Rock Bridge Elementary School, Grade 5-Dr. Young

Celebrating the Legacy, Looking to the Future

When I first read about the terrible injustices that existed during the struggle for civil rights in the United States, it was hard for me to believe. I could not imagine what it must have been like to live in the time of segregation when blacks had to drink from separate water fountains, attend separate schools and ride in the back of the bus. Because of the courage of people like Martin Luther King, Jr. much progress was made toward bringing about justice, equality and freedom. People from all over the world continue to be inspired by his powerful message of peace, love, and justice as they face the struggles which may come in the future.

During his lifetime, Martin Luther King Jr. used words, not violence, to obtain justice. He was influenced by the teachings about non-violent protest by Mahatma Gandhi, who struggled to obtain freedom in India. He gave sermons and speeches, he led non-violent marches, he organized the boycott of buses in Montgomery, Alabama and he even went to jail. Even when he was threatened with violence when his house was bombed and his brother's house was bombed, he continued to fight for justice and freedom. He led others to work for equal rights throughout the world.

In his most famous speech, Martin Luther King Jr. talked about his dreams for the future. He said "I have a dream that one day in Alabama little black boys and black girls will join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." His dream for the future concerned his own children and all children.

On an April day in 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. He knew that his own death would not be the death of his dream. Because of his struggle for justice, much progress was made toward racial equality and peace. He has taught people of all nations that one must stand up for what is right, speak out, and have the courage to fight for what a person believes in. As long as people are inspired to act by leaders such as Dr. King, then changes can happen in the future and dreams can come true.

Martin Luther King's words were his legacy. He spoke up for what was right. Just as Martin Luther King, Jr. was inspired by great leaders such as Jesus and Gandhi, he continues to inspire people today.

Jiseub Song, Grant Elementary School, Grade 5-Mr. Hogan

Diversity

The people of the United States are very fortunate to have equal opportunities. One way to look to the future and create even more opportunities would be to allow people to express their cultural differences. Cultural differences include music, food, clothing styles, religion, and ways of thinking. The more differences from which we have to choose, the easier it is to solve our problems and create a better future.

Life is much more interesting when not everybody is the same. When I walk downtown in Columbia, I can see people in different styles of clothing. I can walk into a music store and pick from endless types of music. The bookstore has books with any different ideas. I can select foods from many different cultures in the restaurants there.

We can be proud of the changes in civil rights in the past, but we need to continue our progress in the future. We can do that by being open-minded about ideas that are new to us. We can encourage others to share their cultures with us without fear of rejection. We can leave the legacy of open-mindedness to our own descendants to help make our world a better place in the future.

Jeffrey Grant, West Junior High School, Grade 8

"Celebrating the Legacy, Looking to the Future"

I am a student of two different ethnic backgrounds.

Many years ago this couldn't be found.

People have seen the good and bad.

Most of all it was sad.

Now it's the future and you might see this more often.

I thank my GOD for being so awesome.

Just remember that GOD loves us all,

But most of all he doesn't let us fall.

Domenic Johnson, Blue Ridge Elementary School, Grade 4-Boys and Girls Club

Are We Equal?

Does the legacy of Martin Luther King exist in the United States of America today? That is the question we ask ourselves today. I think that the legacy of Martin Luther King is not fulfilled. Many people live with prejudices in their hearts. Because of this we should strive to Dr. Martin Luther King's dream, we must reach for that light, that light of equality and peace. But if we were completely equal there would be no goals and goals are the start of something great. Without goals we have nothing. Life was meant to be a circle; once we reach the top and have reached total goal-less equality the only way to go is back to the beginning. Now there are endless goals and possibilities. We must find a little less than perfect spot in this circle and slowly work towards total equality, rush past the prejudices and around the circle to our small spot. For you must take the dark with the light and the curses with the blessings. There is no separation between the pairs. We must be a phoenix, ever living, ever dying. We have not yet achieved Dr. Martin Luther King's dream yet so we must strive for it. But remember we are the United States of America, the ever-living Phoenix.

Stephen Hoffman, Smithton Middle School, Grade 6-Ms. Anderson

Celebrating the Legacy, Looking to the Future

"I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Living a dream is something many people can only pray and hope for, something that, in itself is a dream. Although he did not get to see his vision become a reality, Martin Luther King Junior's children upheld this vision, carried on as their own, and now they are living that very fixation.

We can now celebrate this legacy, that wishful thinking of long ago, the challenge that has become less and less of a dream and more and more a part of our every day lives. Sure, we may ask ourselves "Is there true equality in our world today," and the answer every time is "No." But will there ever be a time when every person is truly equal, a time when there is no prejudice and no unfairness? Again, the answer is no, but by carrying on this legacy and preaching civic virtue until the world's ears are ringing with the sound of it, then and only then, can we step back and say we've done all we can.

No one can force another to treat someone a particular way, but we can set an example for the future generations of the world. As we look toward the future, what is to become of the world we have made? What do we see? Some people see a world of new discoveries, new inventions and high tech everything, and some see a world collapsing on itself because of the pollution of these so-called "great new inventions." Others see a world that will self-destruct because of all the violence and hate, a world that is simply not virtuous. Martin Luther King Junior's goal was to let the people of the world see that it can become a world that is good, a world that loves, a world of peace, and equality. He wanted to spread this vision, not only to people of his race, but to people of all races. He wanted them to see that there was more to a person than what is on the surface, something deeper than the color of their skin. A person is not what he looks like; he is who he is on the inside, a person of character, no matter what kind it may be. Many people cannot see that, cannot look deep enough to see who a person truly is. They make first impressions judging a person by his money, clothes, or lack thereof. "You don't get a second chance to make a first impression." This is so true. Everyone should make their first impression the best, be you, not what you think others want you to be. For, if you are being what the world wants you to be, you are being what you think others want you to be. For, if you are being what the world wants you to be, you are being the world, not who you truly are.

Whether black, white, yellow or green, everybody has one thing in common: they are each unique. No one is the same, and no one should expect people to be. Sharing this dream and working towards making that dream come true, is a goal everyone should share. As each New Year begins, we should celebrate this legacy, and look toward the future.

Amy Chesshir, Jefferson Junior High School, Grade 9-Mrs. McFarland

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream to create an equal world, where people are not judged by their looks, but by their character. I have learned many things from the past that I try to use in the present and I will try to use in the future.

I have learned from my parents is that if you help elderly people that can't do some things themselves, you make their world an easier place to live in. They don't have to struggle anymore when you help them. I helped "Billy", an elderly lady, by raking her leaves. My brothers raked the yard of a man whose back hurt. I could see that that made him very happy and relieved.

Now, I'm trying to be a witness. I try to be a witness at school and youth group by being kind and showing a good attitude.

In the future I would like to open houses for homeless and needy people that provide care. I would open apartment houses and eating houses that would be free. Families could come here while trying to get back on track.

In conclusion, I have learned that by helping others out with something, you make their life a little easier. I am trying to be a witness to others with my faith. In the future, I'd like to open houses that poor and needy people can come to for food and shelter.

Kirsten Lobertson, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7-Mr. Blackburn

My Dream to Help the World

"*I have a dream...*" was the beginning of a famous speech emotionally spoken by Martin Luther King Jr. He had a dream to make the world a better place for the present and the future and we can use the past to help us solve our problems.

I have learned a couple of things from the past to help our world. My families, like many other families, have had illnesses pass through the generations. Taking care of these people when I was younger has helped me have more empathy for people who need doctor's help. Just thinking about that helps me to want to support them and encourage others to help too. A couple of years ago I finally understood what prejudice was. A girl came up to me and started making rude comments about my religion. I haven't seen her for several years and I'm glad, she was the kind of person who judged people she didn't know. A word of advice about judging is if someone in the family is rude and nasty you shouldn't guess the whole family is like that. People shouldn't judge others. Someone may look like a criminal but once you get to know them they could be very honest and trustworthy.

I'm trying to do many things that can help not just my family but everyone else's too. When I see someone struggling I usually try to help him/her. I hope that if I can set a good example for others the world wouldn't have so much fighting or arguing between people. There have been plenty of school shootings in the United States and I try to be nice to everyone hoping they will be nice to other. This helps keep everyone on good terms so we stop violence as much as we are able.

I also have many plans to help the world when I am older. The first thing I want to do is become a teacher and teach kids who can't go to school. This includes kids at hospitals, with home arrest, or they just can't go to school because of some personal problem. This would help more people get better jobs. Before or after becoming a teacher I want to have a kid or two. I would teach them to not judge and to help others in need. Then when they become parents they can teach their kids to do the same by setting a good example.

We can learn a lot from the past. Looking back on different things of the past we can make the present and the future better by making sure we don't make the same mistakes. Before I close I want to say if you have an idea that you think the world could use then speak out and share your ideas. We live in a free country.

I want whoever happens to read this to know it comes from the heart, and it's what I believe in doing to make the world a better place. I'm not afraid to stand up for what I believe in, if I'm thirteen and can share my thoughts freely then anyone can!

Jessika Clark, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7

What's Inside

It doesn't matter what color you are, your race, your accent, or religion.
It really matters how you act, and what you are within.
Let's all hold hands and make a place,
Where all fit in, every race.
A glittering community is all we need,
Where people there have all been freed.
It's time we join up and stick together,
And help each other in every weather.
From every continent to every sea
Let's show a little Diversity!

Kelly Steinhaus, Ridgeway Elementary School, Grade 5-Mrs. Seymour

Celebrating the Legacy, Looking to the Future

Remember back in 1963
Martin Luther King wrote a speech about his Dream.
He saw that one day we would all unite
And end this racist fight
That everyone should get rid of discrimination
That everyone would live up to expectation
Life would expand and kids would be able to play
Color wouldn't matter no one would be left a stray.
Black, White, Green, Yellow, or Red
No more fear of sleeping in your own bed.
Not its 2002, 39 years after this man's words
It's all up to us to move forward
To the future, for our descendents to follow
For we are all looking for a better tomorrow
The King's dream is only half achieved
We have come along way but yet to succeed!
Now we live in the King's dream and legacy
But there is still hate and prejudice,
Discrimination and the KKK
Is yet to be over, and a lot are still this way.
This task is not yet finished
The struggle to erase the past will never be diminished.
We know not of this country's fate.
De the best we can to make it great.
Not just for them and us
But for everyone who wants what is just.
What's been done in the past
Can't be changed, so let's make our future last.
This is our last chance, our final run
Move on because we are far from being done.
Because America's dream to be the best
We'll prove it when we finish this test.

Tim Wuest, Jefferson Junior High School, Grade 9-Mrs. Spate-Smith

King's Legacy

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did not imagine a world with violence and prejudice, much like the one we live in today. Right now, today, people are not doing enough to help each other. What can we do now, and in the future to make a better world for our children?

My great grandpa passed on a legacy to me. That legacy was that people should be treated equally, much like Dr. King's, no matter what color their skin, what religion, and no matter what their age. I hope I make them proud.

Today, what I am doing to make the world a better place is helping people with disabilities. One of them is my big brother, who is dyslectic. Even the small things like holding open a door for an elderly person, can make a difference in the world today. Anyway, that's how I am helping.

In the future, my dream is that future people will understand this legacy, and make a difference. Hopefully that will make the world safe for our children. I also hope our children will appreciate all people.

In conclusion, we need to appreciate Dr. King's legacy, make the world a better place for future generations. So please, do not be mean to mentally or physically challenged people, and help me pas on the legacy.

Scott Davis, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7-Mr. Blackburn

Our world was changed on September 22, 2001. Throughout this tragedy, Columbians reached out to the local Muslim community. Many people were compelled to become familiar with and better understand Islam by visiting Columbia's mosque, during its open house. Looking back in history, one realizes that this would not have been possible only a short time ago. People were uncomfortable visiting unfamiliar places of worship of a religion other than their own. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a wish that someday all people could coexist with equality and peace. Much of his hope has been met; however, future problems may show us that our current level of tolerance will not be enough to keep peace.

Shortly after hijacked planes struck three buildings in September, the Mayor of Columbia, Darwin Hindman, and other city leaders met with various religious leaders to show unity and concern that all citizens continue to be free from harm and discrimination. This is very important in a town such as Columbia. Since the University of Missouri is located in Columbia, it is very diverse. People from all over the world study, teach, and work here. Because of this mix, Columbia is home to many different worship centers. The University is not the only diverse part of Columbia. The public schools have students of many races and beliefs. Because of this mixture in our city, it is very important for citizens to support local businesses and become educated in the beliefs of different people.

Our current acceptance and support of each other may not be enough to keep peace in the future. With the present situation in the Middle East, hostility among various citizens could increase. If problems escalate excessively, some worry that there may be ethnic intolerance in our community. We cannot let this happen!

To insure a peaceful future, total cooperation must exist. Although discrimination has been reduced greatly, it must diminish still. Citizens have grown closer because of tragedy, yet understanding and support must exist at all times, not just those times of disaster.

Damian von Schoenbora, Jefferson Junior High School, Grade 9-Mrs. McFarland

In the newspapers, TVs and radios today, all you here about is violence. Dr. Martin Luther King was a man of peace. He made inspirational speeches to solve world peace problems. The world right now needs another person like Dr. King.

My father passed on to me the gift of caring. He taught me how I should never make fun of anyone, therefore, no one will make fun of me. My dad also taught me to respect elders and peers.

Currently I am involved in an organization called K-Life. L-Life is a place where kids go to have fun and find ways to help out the community. We also learn about God.

In the future I hope to be in the NBA so I could help out the community by donating. It would have a great effect.

All in all there needs to be more community helping centers, more people helping the community, and more people caring for others. Do you want the world to be a better place to live?

Keagan Burkett, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7

Celebrating the Dream, Looking to the Future

Dr. King had a dream that everyone would be judged, not by how they looked, but how they are on the inside. He wanted to help not just our nation, but the entire world with its prejudice issues.

I think the most important lesson that has been passed down to me is to help other people. My family taught me this lesson. My mom works in the schools, helping other people, so she sets a good example for me. My parents also taught me to be sensitive to other people's needs.

To help make the world a better place, I try to help other people in and out of school. I mentor a person after my lunch, during reading class. I also help run a yearbook social skills group after school with my mom.

My dream is that the things I have learned will be passed down to my kids. They will help other people and learn from me. They will volunteer too and enjoy helping other kids.

So to help the world, I help other people in and out of school. I want to pass the traits that I have on to my children, just as my parents did, so they may help the world too.

Rachel Jones, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7-Mr. Blackburn

He looked in the mirror.
Only to see,
Pain for the present,
With a dream,
And a wish,
He hoped would come true.
He wanted a legacy,
His dream to come true,
For people to remember,
And Hope for the future.
He looked from the podium,
Only to see,
Faces in the crowd..
With a dream
And a wish,
He hoped would come true.
He wanted a legacy,
His dream to come true.
For People to remember,
And hope for the future.
He spoke with distinction,
Only to see,
People responding,
To a dream,
And a wish
They hoped would come true.
He wanted a legacy,
His dream to come true,
For people to remember,
And hope for the future.
People stood up for equality,
Only to see
Civil rights changing,
Fulfilling a dream,
And a wish,
Their hope was coming true.
He wanted a legacy,
His dream to come true,
For people to remember,
And hope for the future.
Still today people fight for beliefs,
Only to see,
They're making a difference,
With their dream,
And their wish,
Their hope was coming true.
He left his legacy,
His dream came true,
People remembered,
And still hope for the future.

Kayla Henderson, Rock Bridge High School, Grade 12-Ms. Pat Turner

I was born after the Gulf War. Ever since I knew what war was I disliked it...

I think there should be no war, the word itself should not exist. Countries should get along peacefully instead of having these constant fights. The people in charge of one country should not start a war with another country over land or weapons.

The government makes war seem like a good thing because it protects us, which it does but it also destroys people's homes and families. I think everyone in the world should have homes and equal opportunities. Although most people in the US do, in some countries that is still a problem.

Weapons of mass destruction are heard often about on the news or radio. I think the US is being over protective of these weapons by telling other countries they cannot have them when nobody should have them at all.

Terrorists need to realize that they can't push people around! They need to learn that they are not getting anywhere by killing innocent people. Some think they are mental and don't know what they are doing. But I don't think they are mental and they know what they are doing and they like it, they like it! We all need to come together and stop this nonsense! All I want is for everyone to have: opportunities, the right to make choices, respect each other, be responsible, and get careers. When that happens the world will be a better place and that is my dream.

Dalton R. Stark, Russell Boulevard Elementary School, Grade 5-Mrs. Stanley

Celebrating the Legacy, Looking to the Future

During the years of discrimination,
One single person changed the nation.
His name was Martin Luther King,
He exclaimed, "Let freedom ring!"
He looked at the faces of all the men,
And couldn't bear to watch this sin.
Being hung or taking a lashing,
Nothing could stop this man's passion.
No words can describe what he's passed on,
You could try from dusk till dawn.
You say he stopped the black/white war?
Oh no, you see, he's done much more.
He stood in front of the anxious crowd,
And didn't hesitate to say aloud,
There are no difference, just black and white,
Separating the two, they have no right.
His words are still live; in stone they're set,
We'll always remember, we'll never forget.
Black and white are no longer estranged,
But still today, minds go unchanged.
What can you do? Try to make them see,
We're all the same, just A and B
Remove segregation, disregard race,
Let kindness and love take its place.
A huge mistake our nation made,
But one great man wasn't afraid.

Jessica Ketring, Jefferson Junior High School, Grade 9-Mrs. McFarland

Dr. Martin Luther King had a dream that everyone would be united. My dream is just like the dream he had, that all people are created equally and those people will also be treated equally.

I have been lucky to have parents who have set the example to not judge people by how they dress or look but by their character. My mom frequently says it is not how someone looks on the outside but how they look on the inside that matters. Just like with homeless people. Most of them are the friendliest people you will ever meet, they just can't afford what most of us take for granted. Also if someone doesn't look like you, talk like you, or believe in the same God as you do, you shouldn't treat them any different from anyone else.

Right now we are on the brink of war with Iraq. I think we should talk with them and solve our problems peacefully. At school people say we should blow them off the earth. I think we shouldn't bomb the country until we know who and where to look for whoever is responsible for terrorist acts and weapons of mass destruction or more problems will occur. I think even the government thinks we should kill everyone in Iraq. Awe cannot foresee the future or know what might happen if we would go to war with Iraq.

I hope that in the future there won't be any wars or conflicts. Everyone needs to have a controlled temper so something small won't get out of control and then no one will have anything against anyone to start a war or conflict.

From the past to the future my dream is that people will treat other people with respect and kindness and will talk with words instead of actions. Most of all I dream that there won't be any wars because everyone will be united.

Darrin Haas, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7-Mr. Blackburn

His Dream, Our Equality
He was great,
He changed our fate,
We joined together,
His legacy lives forever,
We may be equal,
But is it real?
We may be different
On the outside,
But we're all the same
On the inside,
He made us more equal
This was for real
He stopped our fights
He showed us our rights
Lets work together
Let his dream live forever
Let's be equal
This time for real
Can we make a better place?
For our children's sake?
Let's remember him
Ad his dream.
He never gave up faith
He was truly great.

Alex Turner, Smithton Middle School, Grade 6-Ms. Anderson

No Wars!

Religion, oil, discrimination, governments...they all have something in common. They are common reasons for wars without meaning (as if there are wars that have any meaning). I have learned from the past all about these horrible worthless wars. I am currently trying to make this world a better place to live, and have a strong voice in the government of this country. All of this is for one dream: NO MORE WARS!!!!

From my legacy, I have learned many things from the past. My dad is committed to peaceful approaches to conflicts. He has taught me how it is important to respect people of other cultures and religions. He has also taught me about helping people who are in need even if they are of different countries. In particular, people under sanctions and war. My dad has also passed on to me his great math skills.

The things that I am currently doing are to excel in my school and get a good education and eventually get a louder voice in the country I live in. I am also helping the people in need around the world by supporting my dad in his attempts to educate people about wars and peace. I am from Iraq, so I oppose the "war on Iraq plan", that Bush has put into his mind. It seems to me that Bush will not change that plan even if the UN inspectors succeeded in searching every square meter of Iraq. Bush is using sanctions, which are weapons of mass destruction, on Iraq in order to force it to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction that Iraq "might have" right now! Smart bombs and depleted uranium are not less dangerous than any other weapons of mass destruction.

I have some dreams that I will start education people and then next generations have to continue my work until our goal is accomplished. My first dream is the most important one in my life: NO MORE WARS!! If this dream is fulfilled during my lifetime, I will be very happy. This is a dream that most people wish for, and I think that most of this will be solved if the United States stops trying to conquer other lands because of their religion, natural resources, or just to show that they are superior over other nations. I also think that this will be solved when the UN does not always vote for every war that the US wants to create. There have been many protests against this war that is stirring up. More than 2 million people have protested all over the world against this war, but all those people only got their name in the newspaper as people opposing the war, and then nothing was done to stop the war from happening. If all those protests actually had a part in stopping the war, there would be no more war against any country. If I could change the future so that normal people would have a much stronger voice in wars, then the world would be a much better place to live. My second dream is that no one would discriminate against each other. This is a very common cause of war, so this also goes along with my first dream. I am a Muslim and I am sometimes looked at as some one who came from another planet. It should not matter what color your skin is, what religion you practice, or what country you come from. We all live on this world, and we should all work together to find new and better ways to survive or to live, not other ways to discriminate against each other. This world will be a better place definitely, when all wars and discriminations are put to an end. Those are my dreams.

In conclusion, I think that I have learned many things about wars during my family's legacy, and I am trying to help this world become a better place by using my knowledge about wars to put them to an end. I also dream of having a more peaceful and better world by putting all wars and discrimination to an end. Thank you for reading my essay.

Salahodeca Abdul-Kafi, Gentry Middle School, Grade 7

To Be A Friend

Katie says to be A FRIEND you have to be white. I'm not.
Megan says to be A FRIEND you have to be really smart. I'm not.
Andrew says to be A FRIEND you have to ace every test. I don't.
Amy says to be A FRIEND you have to wear fancy clothes. I don't.
Emily says to be A FRIEND you have to come from a perfect family. I don't.
Jennifer says to be FRIEND you have to live in a really big house. I don't.
Tommy says to be A FRIEND you have to share your snack with everyone. I don't.
Mom says to be A FRIEND you have to be just the way you are.
Now I have lots of friends.

Stephanie Jackson, Midway Heights Elementary School, Grade 5-Mrs. Hensel

Celebrating the Legacy, Looking to the Future

Our world is not perfect, but it is fine,
But I wish it were perfect in the heart and the mind,
I thought America was all about
Shouting out what you believe in
Instead of having doubts.
I see people that are rich,
People that are poor,
People that wish that they
Had so much more.
I see people that are loving and nice,
And some people I see their hearts as cold as ice.
Black or white, men or women, I don't care.
Why can't everything be peaceful, joyful and fair?
I have a dream where my hopes are high
But a little of me says it just may just die.
I have a dream where the women are strong
And where the men don't stay at work all day long.
Whatever race they are even if from afar
They should be treated well and god
Just like they should.
Whether they're disabled, or blind
Doesn't mean they don't have a mind.
I feel my dreams will flow on and on
But I still someday think they might die and be gone.
I believe in my country I really do
I think of it as if it's about to bloom.
Years before us it has been gloomy and dark.
Yes, you can see it
Yes, you can feel it
It has left its mark.
But now, it's our generations' turn
To turn that dark spot into a spark.
No matter woman or man, light or dark
We'll have to keep that spark
Shiny bright.
So the generations after us
Can go on to bed
Knowing there is a safe and bright future
Laying ahead.

Caroline Couper, Rock Bridge High School, Grade 11

Why do we celebrate Martin Luther King's Birthday?

I believe that we celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday due to his legacy of trying to make the world a better place. He gave excellent speeches and straight out told the truth. He had a dream that all people will join hands and forget the ethnic backgrounds and unite together as one. The legacy will live in me as long as I have a mother of one background and a father of another background. With the love that Dr. King has shown and fought for the past has put me in this world today. I am very grateful for my ancestors and my family.

Tre' Hern, Benton Elementary School, Grade 4-Boys and Girls Club

Diamond

*I have a dream...rings loud in my ears,
Echoes down valleys,
Penetrates crevices in granite mountain sides, stubborn stone minds,
So even the rocks know him well
And see his dream unfold into reality.
This diamond dream, cut of respect and enduring equality,
Tough sometimes tricked in folds of mottled tissue paper,
Is there,
A gift lifted up with sure brown hands and a strong,
Strong
Voice.
Yet, to pass it on -- this cloudless gem,
I send my voice into the wind,
Not sturdy and loud,
But soft and mild.
I speak not to masses,
But to my child and every child,
Whispering peace before they sleep so in eyes awake
This diamond gleams
And to their children passes-
That is my dream.*

Sarah Fox, Rock Bridge High School-Mrs. Turner

Through His Eyes

"I have a dream that one day my children will go to school and be judged not by the color of their skin but the content of their character." Dr. Martin Luther King's words echo through the minds of others. And in the speech Dr. King said many years ago we heard not only his speech, but also a message, "It is good to be different." I couldn't imagine waking up to a world where everyone was the same. It would be like looking in a mirror every time I saw someone. It would be like a thousand clones walking around in a nightmare. I wouldn't want that; but not Dr. Martin Luther King.

When he looked at an African American, he saw a beautiful face. Through his eyes he saw a world of people of all different kinds. He accepted each and every one of them.

I am one of those children with many freckles. Once I heard the phrase, "a face without freckles, is like a sky without stars". I know that's what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would have said to me; no matter how different you are, you are beautiful.

That's what he saw
Through his eyes.

Sarah Brennan, Russell Boulevard Elementary School, Grade 5-Ms. McCarty



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